



Is Your Team Ready to Protect Your Corporation from the Opioid Crisis?

By Michael Gavendo



As someone who has been in the security and concierge industry for over 20 years and who works closely with condominium managers, it is my responsibility to not only bring awareness to issues that attract liability, protect property/assets or adversely reflect the image of the corporations we service, but I must also recommend training programs and procedures that will assist condominium managers in the preservation of human life.

Since 2016, there have been more than 9,000 opioid-related deaths nationwide. In 2017, approximately 11 lives were lost each day because of opioid overdoses and more concerning, 94% of opioid overdose deaths happen by accident and involve young Canadians aged 15 to 24

(Federal, 2019). 629 people in Ontario died from opioid-related causes from January to June of 2018 alone, which is an approximate 15% increase from the same time period in 2017, when 549 people died from opioid-related causes (Provincial, 2019). There were 6,688 opioid-related emergency department visits in the province in 2018, up from 5,909 during the same time frame in 2017 (Provincial, 2019).

The story I am about to tell did not happen within a condominium complex, however, whether your residents make the poor choice themselves, or leave it up to one of their guests (or perhaps the owner's tenant and their guest that just moved in) overdoses have happened within condominium environments and they will again. The question you need to ask yourself is whether your concierge and security team are prepared?

It was a busy day for the west-end retail facility. A few minor incidents at the McDonalds and Tim Hortons with the usual crowd gathered in this popular community hub. The call came in from Taco Bell around 1:00 p.m., a call that is all too familiar for security practitioners nowadays – an unknown male had exited the washroom and fallen to the floor appearing to be unconscious. The security team arrived quickly and after determining that the male was slipping in and out of consciousness, one security guard began to assess breathing as part of normal first-aid procedure and placed him in the recovery position, while his partner made the call to 911 through our communications centre.

Think about whether or not this is how the story would end at your condominium? If you answered “Yes”, it is possible that the next call might

Month	Non-Fatal	Fatal
Aug '17†	396	24
Sep '17	373	27
Oct '17	238	13
Nov '17	189	14
Dec '17	175	10
Jan '18	181	11
Feb '18	178	6
Mar '18	219	11
Apr '18	216	7
May '18	259	7
Jun '18	291	16
Jul '18	301	14
Aug '18	340	15
Sep '18	338	15
Oct '18	250	13
Nov '18	281	19
Dec '18	267	12
Jan '19	286	11
Feb '19	302	18
Mar '19	452	22

Monthly number of suspected opioid overdose calls received by Toronto Paramedic Services August 3, 2017 to April 14, 2019.

have been from EMS to the coroner. Am I being slightly dramatic? Absolutely, and I do this to show how the outcome of this story should be commonplace for every condominium that has a first-aid kit and is staffed with people who know how to use it.

While one security guard continued to administer CPR, the site supervisor could be seen by the crowd (who had now gathered in large numbers) running toward the team assisting the unconscious male clutching a little black case in his hand (like the one pictured). He observed the male's lips turning blue and his eyes rolling back as he struggled to breathe (respiratory depression). Based on opioid training and how to recognize a potential overdose, it became clear that it was time. The supervisor put on his latex gloves and then carefully and deliberately proceeded to take the Naloxone nasal spray out of the packaging, placed the applicator into the male's nostril, depressed the applicator and within seconds the male subject was awake and fully aware of his surroundings. The male indicated to the security guards that he had taken Fentanyl to use as pain medication. Shortly thereafter, Toronto Fire and Toronto Police arrived and identified the male who was transported to hospital by EMS for further

testing. One of the EMS personnel looked at the security supervisor and asked, "What kind of training do you have for that stuff?" The supervisor indicated that we, as his employer, provided all staff with training and even administered a test before staff were permitted to use the overdose reversing life-saver. The supervisor told me that it reminded him of the first time he used a portable AED and had déjà vu when EMS has once asked him the same question in regard to our training on the use of the now commonplace heart-shocker.

After reviewing this story with our team and the numerous other incidents that have required security personnel to administer Naloxone, one question remains: What is preventing every condominium's first-aid kit from stocking nasally administered Naloxone application devices? The answer may lie in a similar rationale that prevented condominiums from having portable AEDs on-site. Liability? Insurance?

Speak to your corporation lawyer to learn more about how *The Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act* is part of the Federal Government's comprehensive approach to addressing the crisis. It will help encourage Canadians to save a life during an overdose situation (Federal, 2019). Thanks to this legislation, combined with proper training and testing of responders, Naloxone

is now a must-have for every security and concierge operation.

What happens next time a resident or guest collapses in your common area? Will your team be ready?

References

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Is your condominium prepared to deal with a possible opioid overdose? When used by a trained concierge or other staff, this emergency kit containing Naloxone could save a life.